

Jack O'Brian's TVIEWS

All This and May Craig, Too



Jack O'Brian
moment of truth in all of Mikoyan's heavily propagandized visit.

It was typical of Spivak that he didn't turn over the tough job of trying finally to pin down the adroit old Bolshevik. It also was fine, for all the faint holler set up by the few who can be counted on to scold about poor TV etiquette when the Commies, for a change, set it in the neck.

THE SUCCESS OF "MEET THE PRESS," pioneer press conference of the air, is attested by the countless imitations, some of them good, mostly not.

Now almost 13 years old—it started Nov. 6, 1947—it has created more front page news for the Monday morning newspapers, after the normally tough Sunday as source of news, than any other TV show.

Lawrence E. Spivak some seasons ago bought out his former partner Martha Rountree, later sold "Meet the Press" to NBC for a fat capital gain.

It is a frankly inexpensive program, which pays each newsmen on its panel \$150 per show. Spivak, of course, gets a top TV star's or executive's salary, estimated in the six-figure class.

It consistently has attracted good audiences, top level sponsors and the most famous Washington newsmen.

WHY DOES IT ATTRACT such quality attention? Mostly because it has a fine sense of excitement whipped

up by Spivak and in the choice of guests to be queried. Sen. Jack Kennedy made his first nationally noted appearance on "Meet the Press" several years ago and drew the first suspicions that he was presidential timber. Whitaker Chambers accepted the challenge thrown down by Alger Hiss—to repeat his accusations without Congressional immunity—and publicly on "Meet the Press" branded Hiss a Communist. Thomas E. Dewey first announced his withdrawal from the 1952 presidential race in 1952 on "Meet the Press" and endorsed Gen. Eisenhower. It was on Spivak's cameras that Sen. Bilbo defiantly told the nation he was a member of the infamous Ku Klux Klan.

Herbert Hoover on "Meet the Press" suggested creation of a new office—"Administrative Vice President of the U. S."—and Sen. Jack Kennedy studied the transcript of the show and announced he would present legislation to authorize Hoover's excellent plan. Gen. Walter Bedell Smith gave the first public hint that the Russians might have an A-bomb, saying they had already "solved the problem of atomic fission."

GUESTS ON "MEET THE PRESS" have included virtually every top newsmaking figure of the past near-dozen years, including Vice-President Nixon, John Foster Dulles, France's Premier Mendès-France, England's Sir Anthony Eden, and all those eager gentlemen vamping until ready for the presidential election next year.

The show has won all major awards, none higher than this, from John Foster Dulles: "Meet the Press does a job of intellectual illumination. Probing is done by experts who are thorough but not antagonistic. Because the programs are wholly unheated, the response are bound to be revealing."

All this—and May Craig, too!



LARRY SPIVAK
He Paces the Panel